DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 145 986 RC 010 166

AUTHOR Clayton, Jane; Lloyd, Dick
TITLE Sonoma County Plants (How the Indians Used Them).
INSTITUTION Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Rosa, Calif.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 44p.; Not available in hard copy due to use of colored paper in original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Culture; *Elementary Education; Environmental Education; Food; *Guides; Illustrations; *Natural Resources; Outdoor Education; *Plant Identification
IDENTIFIERS *California (Sonoma County)

ABSTRACT

Written for children, this guide to the plants found in Sonoma County, California includes sketches of 20 plants and descriptions of the way in which American Indians traditionally used them. Many of the plants presented here parallel those found on a wildlife walk at Spring Lake in Santa Rosa, California where outdoor education expeditions can be arranged. Identified by use and name, the plants included in this guide are: used for baskets and fibers (poison oak; willow; sedge; redbud; and iris); used as edible roots (camas; soap root; thistle; and cattail); used as edible leaves (miner's lettuce); used as berries and seeds (wild blackberry; toyon; manzanita; chia; tansy-mustard; and lace-pod); used as nuts (bay; oak; California buckeye; and pine). (JC)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

rec 06-09-77

ED145986

SONOMA COUNTY PLANTS

(HOW THE INDIANS USED THEM)

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. David Wood, Dir
Learning Resource Services
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

RC010166

(THE COVER)

POISON OAK

Poison Oak is a very common plant in Sonoma County. It is easily recognized. Poison Oak is a vine with groups of three glossy green leaves.

The Indians had many uses for this plant. The juice from the stems, leaves, or roots was used as a cure for warts and ringworm. The leaves were bound over rattlesnake bites. The fresh juice made a fine black dye for basketry materials.

The Indians rarely were affected by Poison Oak, but most people get a very itchy rash by just touching it.

Written, illustrated and dedicated

to the children in Sonoma County

by

JANE CLAYTON

(curator)

Roseland Children's Native American Museum
950 Sebastopol Road, Santa Rosa 95401

Tom Collins, Superintendent
Roseland School District

---

with help from

DICK LLOYD

(consultant)

Sonoma County Office of Education

Reproduced and distributed as a service of the Curriculum Services and Learning Resource Services Departments of the Sonoma County Office of Education, Santa Rosa, 95401.

WALTER A. EAGAN, Ed.D.

Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools

1977

(Permission is granted to reproduce this booklet for non-commercial purposes.)

Many of the plants seen in this booklet may be seen on a wildlife walk at Spring Lake in Santa Rosa.

To arrange a conducted tour contact the Park Ranger at Spring Lake County Park, 539-8092.

CONTENTS

Use	Name	Page
Baskets and Fibers	Poison Oak	Cover
	Willow	1 - 2
	Sedge	3 - 4
	Redbud	5 - 6
	Iris	7 - 8
Edible Roots	Camas	9 - 10
	Soap Root	11 - 12
	Thistle	13 - 14
	Cattail	15 - 16
Edible Leaves	Miner's Lettuce	17 - 18
Berries and Seeds	Wild Blackberry	19 - 20
	Toyon	21 - 22
	Manzanita	23 - 24
	Chia	25 - 26
	Tansy - Mustard	27 - 28
	Lace - Pod	29 - 30
Nuts	Bay	31 - 32
	Oak	33 - 34
	California Buckeye	35 - 36
	Pine	37 - 38

WILLOW

The Willow shrub or tree is found growing along stream banks or in other damp places. The Indians used Willow branches for many things from building homes to basketry.

Willow twigs for basketry were gathered in the early spring or late fall. Long straight twigs about one-half inch thick were best.

The twigs were scraped until they were all the same size. The twigs were dried in the sun for two or three days. After drying, they were stored in a dry place for one year.

Willow

SEDGE GRASS

Several kinds of Sedge grass grow in Sonoma County. They grow in the damp, sandy soil near streams and marshes. Sedge grasses have a triangular shaped stem.

The Indians used the roots of these grasses for their baskets. The Indian women very carefully dug around the plant and only cut off some of the longest roots. The Sedge plants were never damaged.

The roots were split along the center. The outer bark was peeled off. The split, cleaned roots were coiled for drying. The roots were allowed to dry at least six months.

10

CALIFORNIA REDBUD

The Redbud is a large shrub or tree. It grows in dry places on the hills of Sonoma County. The reddish colored branches are gathered in the fall. The Indian women are careful not to hurt the trees. Only a few branches are cut from each tree.

The small Redbud branches are cut, split, and dried just like Sedge roots. Redbud is used to weave the beautiful reddish-brown designs found in Pomo baskets.

Redbud

7

IRIS

Iris grows in most of the mountain areas of Sonoma County. The leaves were gathered by Indians. The edge fiber from the sides of the leaves was used to make rope and fish nets. This rope was very strong and flexible.

Iris 14

CAMAS

Camas is also called Indian Quamash. The bulb of this plant was very important to the Pomo Indians. This plant is found in wet meadows. The flowers of the Camas were dark blue.

The bulbs of the Camas were cooked in many ways. They were boiled, roasted, baked in earth ovens or pounded into meal. The cooked bulbs were very sweet and nutritious.

Camas
(Quamask)

SOAP ROOT (AMOLE)

Soap Root grows in many dry places in Sonoma County. This plant has white flowers on a tall stalk.

The Indians had many uses for this plant. The crushed bulb made a fine soap used for all sorts of washing jobs. Some Indians roasted the bulbs in earthen ovens and ate them. The outer coating of the bulb made fine brushes. The roasted bulbs were also put on sores. The thick juice made from roasting the bulbs made a good glue. This glue was used for many things.

SoapRoot
(Amole)

THISTLE

This prickly plant grows everywhere. The roots become sweet and sugary when roasted.

20

CATTAIL

This plant which grows in wet places was used in many ways. The root was eaten raw or roasted. Young shoots were eaten as raw vegetables. The leaves were used in building huts.

22

MINER'S LETTUCE

Miner's lettuce is also called Indian lettuce. The Pomo Indians ate the leaves of this plant raw. It was like a salad. The Indians also boiled the leaves in a basket and ate them like we do spinach.

Miner's lettuce grows in shady places in Sonoma County. The flowers are white. They come from a saucer-like leaf.

Miner's lettuce

WILD BLACKBERRY

Blackberry plants grow wild in most places in California, except for the desert areas. The Pomo Indians liked to eat these berries.

The Indians also liked to eat many other kinds of wild berries such as huckleberries, thimbleberries, strawberries, and grapes.

The Pomo Indians ate the berries raw most of the time.

26

TOYON OR CALIFORNIA HOLLY

This large bushy plant is also called Christmas Berry. It grows in brushy areas all over Sonoma County. The bright red berries were gathered by Indians. They were cooked before being eaten in order to take away the slight bitter taste of the fresh fruit.

28

MANZANITA

Manzanita grows on the dry sunny hills of California. Manzanita is a shrub, but sometimes it looks like a small tree. The flowers of this plant are light pink. The plant blooms in late winter.

The woody part of the shrub is dark red and the wood is very hard. The Pomo Indians used the wood to make tools and other things.

The Indians gathered the berries of the Manzanita plant when they were ripe. Some of the berries were eaten fresh; others were dried for winter use. The dried berries made very good drink. The dried berries were also ground into meal.

The leaves of the Manzanita were used for an Indian medicine. The leaves were boiled to make a lotion and this was put on the body to cure poison oak, colds, and headaches.

MANZANITA

CHIA

This very common plant grows in dry open places in Sonoma County. The seeds of the Chia plant were collected in tightly woven baskets. The seeds were used in many ways. A tea-like drink was made from them. The seeds were ground into a fine flour that had high food value. Sometimes Chia flour was mixed with other kinds of flour and baked into little cakes with a special flavor.

32

TANSY - MUSTARD, PEPPERGRASS

This plant grows in many places in Sonoma County. The small red seeds were gathered and ground into a flour that has a peppery taste. The young leaves were also eaten as green vegetables. The seeds of other mustard plants were also used by the Indians.

34

LACE - POD

The seeds from this plant which grows in the coastal areas were used to make a flour that is much like Tansy - Mustard. This flour was mixed with other seed flours in making mush and soup. A tea was made from the whole plant that was sometimes used to cure stomach - ache.

36

THE BAY TREE

The Bay tree is also called the California Laurel. Many of these trees grow in Sonoma County. The Bay tree is very large and has many nuts.

The Pomo Indians liked eating the nuts of this tree. When the nuts were ripe they turned dark purple and looked like olives. These nuts were roasted in a parching basket. They tasted something like peanuts. The nuts were also ground into meal and stored for winter.

When you crush the leaf of the Bay tree, it has a peppery smell. Your mother uses the leaf as a seasoning in her cooking.

The Pomo Indians also made a tea out of Bay leaves. This tea was used as a cure for headaches and stomach aches.

Bay leaves were also used in Indian houses to keep out fleas.

37

OAK

The Oak tree grows in most parts of California. There are many different kinds of Oak trees.

The nut of the Oak tree is called an acorn. The acorn was the most important food for the Indians. Raw acorns are very bitter. The Indians had to prepare them carefully for eating.

The acorns were first dried in the sun and stored away in large baskets. When the acorns were needed, the Indian women ground them very finely on a stone mortar. The meal was then leached for several hours.

Leaching was usually done by a running stream. A small hole was dug in the sand. The hole was lined with fern or wild grape leaves. The acorn meal was placed in this hole so that the water from the stream gently ran through it. The meal was used to make cakes, bread, and a kind of mush or soup.

Coast Live
Oak

CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE

Buckeye grows in wooded areas throughout Sonoma County. The Indians used the nut for food but had to be much more careful to leach out the bitter acids. They usually leached the pounded meal as much as ten times. Each time it was washed, it was allowed to dry in a sand filter before being washed again.

42

PINE

The Pine grows in many places in Sonoma County, although not as commonly as the Redwood or Douglas Fir. Large cone pines have nuts that are eaten after being dried or roasted. The gum or resin from Pine trees was used by the Indians to help cure various ills.

PINE